

SEPTEMBER 27, 2006 SUMMARY

Reports/Follow-up

Consistent with the Delta Protection Act and the policies of the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta, adopted by the Delta Protection Commission (Commission), a collaborative has been formed to discuss the growing issue of abandoned vessels in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta). The increasing number of abandoned vessels has prompted recognition that it is a Delta-wide issue that has aesthetic, environmental, and illegal activity consequences.

To date, the collaborative has included law enforcement and resource management representatives from the five Delta counties (Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo). It is anticipated that future discussions will also include county planning and code enforcement representatives, marina owners, and others with an interest in the issue, including the Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers.

Although there is minimal funding support, to the tune of \$500,000 annually statewide, available to local governmental agencies provided through a grant program administered by the California Department of Boating and Waterways, this source can only be utilized to remove recreational vessels and requires a 10% match. With such limited funding, the problem continues to grow at an alarming rate resulting in vessels that often end up being used for illegal activities, including the housing of drug labs, and environmental impacts from toxic waste discharge.

The focus of discussions, to date, has included:

- Delta-wide law enforcement collaboration involving local, state and federal jurisdictions in that the primary waterways in the Delta, the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, include state and federal navigation channels
- Need for consistent ordinances that allow for removal and legal action in a timely and streamlined manner (possibly even a statewide ordinance);
- Development of a preventative program that provides incentives for upland disposal at an appropriate site for a limited or waived fee;
- Development of funding sources such as a portion of boat registration to be earmarked for abandoned vessel removal program;
- Legislation to allow for funding currently administered by California Boating and Waterways to be allocated for commercial vessel removal as well as recreational vessels; and
- The establishment of a fund held by Delta Protection Commission to assist local governments with the currently required 10% match for funding (w/reimbursement back to the Commission) to allow for timely removal.

Next steps will include continued discussions to develop and implement the above concepts and to seek effective partnership to successfully minimize the issue through collaborative Delta-wide efforts.